

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1-39 (Canceled)

40. (Currently Amended)

The fastening system according to claim ~~39~~ 46, wherein said first leg projecting approximately perpendicularly from the first edge of the first panel, said first hook projection ~~faces towards the underside of the first panel~~ projects vertically downward from a distal end of the first leg, said second leg projecting approximately perpendicularly from the second ~~opposite~~ edge of the second panel, and

~~the second hook projection faces towards the top side of the second panel~~ projects vertically upward from a distal end of the second leg.

41. (Currently Amended)

The fastening system according to claim ~~39~~ 46, wherein each of the first and second inclined retaining surfaces ~~of the hook projections~~ engage each other such that each of the complementary hook projections first and second hook

elements hook one into the other only by elastic deformation.

42. (Currently Amended)

The fastening system according to claim 41, wherein a clearance is provided between the ~~free~~ distal end of the second hook projection ~~at the lower portion~~ of the second panel and the first edge of the first panel, and the ~~free proximal~~ end of the first hook projection at an ~~under~~ upper portion of the first panel bears against the second panel at least in a region of the upper portion of the second edge of the second panel.

43. (Currently Amended)

The fastening system according to claim ~~39~~ 46, wherein intermediate spaces in the fastened ~~assembled~~ condition of the first and second ~~two~~ panels form adhesive pockets.

44. (Currently Amended)

The fastening system according to claim ~~39~~ 46, wherein the panels substantially comprise an MDF, HDF, or chipboard material.

45. (Currently Amended)

The fastening system according to claim ~~39~~ 46, wherein, an inclined adhesive pocket is formed between an inwardly inclined end of the first panel and an outwardly inclined portion of the second panel, which mates with the end of the first panel at top sides of the first panel and the second panel and extends downward toward the leg of the second panel.

46. (New)

A fastening system for panels comprising:

at least one pair of oppositely disposed retaining profiles arranged on each of the panels; a first of the pair of retaining profiles arranged on a first edge of each of the panels; and a second of the pair of retaining profiles arranged on a second edge of each of the panels, the first edge being opposite the second edge on each of the panels;

the first of the pair of retaining profiles having a first, hook element and the second of the pair of retaining profiles having a second hook element;

the first hook element complementing the second hook element such that the first hook element on a first panel hooks directly and vertically into the second hook element on a second panel to fasten the first panel to the second panel;

the first hook element having a first hook projection connected to the first edge of each of the panels by a first leg, the first leg projecting from an upper portion of the first edge of each of the panels, the first hook projection having an inclined retaining surface, such that the first hook projection is reduced from a distal end of the first hook projection to a proximal end of the first hook projection;

the second hook element having a second hook projection connected to the second edge of each of the panels by a second leg, the second leg projecting from a lower portion of the second edge of each of the panels, the second hook projection having an inclined retaining surface, such that the second hook projection is reduced from a distal end of the second hook projection to a proximal end of the second hook projection;

wherein, in a fastened position,

the inclined retaining surface of the first hook projection of the first panel bears against the inclined retaining surface of the second hook projection of the second panel to fasten the first panel against the second panel so as to afford a gap-free floor surface;

the distal end of the first hook projection of the first panel bears against the second leg of the second panel, and

a space is provided between the distal end of the second hook projection of the second panel and the first leg of the first panel, the space extending vertically between the distal end of the second hook projection of the second panel and first leg of the first panel and extending horizontally between the proximal end of the first hook projection of the first panel and the first edge of the first panel.